

For example, Section 5 subjected to preclearance and could have blocked the Texas Education Administration (TEA) from closing the North Forest Independent School District (NFISD) and disbanding its locally elected school board comprised of 7 African American members.

Once freed by the Shelby County decision from having to pass muster under Section 5, however, TEA directed the annexation of the NFISD by HISD and dissolved the school board, thus diluting the ability of the African American and Hispanic community residents served by NFISD to influence the decisions affecting the education opportunities of their children.

Protecting voting rights and combating voter suppression schemes are two of the critical challenges facing our great democracy.

Without safeguards to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the polls, more injustices are likely to occur and the voices of millions silenced.

Those of us who cherish the right to vote justifiably are skeptical of Voter ID laws because we understand how these laws, like poll taxes and literacy tests, can be used to impede or negate the ability of seniors, racial and language minorities, and young people to cast their votes.

Consider the demographic groups who lack a government issued ID: African Americans: 25%; Asian Americans: 20%; Hispanic Americans: 19%; Young people, aged 18–24: 18%; Persons with incomes less than \$35,000: 15%.

Voter ID laws are just one of the means that can be used to abridge or suppress the right to vote. Others include:

1. Curtailing or Eliminating Early Voting
2. Ending Same-Day Registration
3. Not counting provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct on Election Day will not count.
4. Eliminating Teenage Pre-Registration
5. Shortened Poll Hours
6. Lessening the standards governing voter challenges to vigilantes like the King Street Patriots to cause trouble at the polls.

Today, I call upon House Speaker RYAN to bring legislation intended to protect the right to vote of all Americans to the floor for debate and vote.

Specifically, I call for the passage of the bipartisan Voting Rights Amendments Act, (H.R. 3899 and H.R. 885) of which I am an original co-sponsor, which repairs the damage done to the Voting Rights Act by the Supreme Court decision.

This legislation replaces the old 'static' coverage formula with a new dynamic coverage formula, or 'rolling trigger,' which effectively gives the legislation nationwide reach because any state and any jurisdiction in any state potentially is subject to being covered if the requisite number of violations are found to have been committed.

Alternatively, I call upon the Speaker to let the House debate and vote on the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 (H.R. 2867), a bill that provides even greater federal oversight of jurisdictions which have a history of voter suppression and protects vulnerable communities from discriminatory voting practices.

Second, I call for the passage of H.R. 12, the Voter Empower Act of 2015, legislation I have co-sponsored that protects voters from

suppression, deception, and other forms of disenfranchisement by modernizing voter registration, promoting access to voting for individuals with disabilities, and protecting the ability of individuals to exercise the right to vote in elections for federal office.

Before concluding there is one other point I would like to stress.

In his address to the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Johnson said: "Presidents and Congresses, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot.

"But only the individual Negro, and all others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment."

In other words, political power—and the justice, opportunity, inclusion, and fulfillment it provides—comes not from the right to vote but in the exercise of that right.

And that means it is the civic obligation of every citizen to both register and vote in every election, state and local as well as federal.

Because if we can register and vote, but fail to do so, we are guilty of voluntary voter suppression, the most effective method of disenfranchisement ever devised.

And in recent years, we have not been doing a very good job of exercising our civic responsibility to register, vote, and make our voices heard.

In the last two mayoral elections in Houston, barely 10 percent of city residents bothered to cast ballots (12% in 2011 and 13% in 2013); in many district-level elections, turnout rates were less than 10 percent.

For millions of Americans, the right to vote protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is sacred treasure, earned by the sweat and toil and tears and blood of ordinary Americans who showed the world it was possible to accomplish extraordinary things.

As we are approaching the 51st anniversary of that landmark law, let us rededicate ourselves to honoring those who won for us this precious right by remaining vigilant and fighting against both the efforts of others to abridge or suppress the right to vote and our own apathy in exercising this sacred right.

VOTING RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), who represents the Houston and Harris County area, who does such a great job of speaking out on these issues.

Representative JACKSON LEE and really the entire delegation down there—Representatives GENE GREEN and AL GREEN, along with Representative JACKSON LEE—do a great job of keeping this on the forefront of Texans' minds and on the United States' mind.

Texas is such a large State that oftentimes, legislation that is passed out of Texas has an impact on the rest of

the Nation. It does seem that much of the discriminatory laws regarding redistricting and regarding voter suppression, like the voter ID bill, sadly, has emanated from our State.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you just how bad it is in our State. This is going to be really hard for some people to believe. But in the State of Texas, if a young person on a college campus were to find themselves their freshman year lost on the campus, or if they were to find themselves in a little bit of trouble on campus, they would be able to show their student ID to the proper law enforcement official, who is a police officer recognized by the State of Texas, on the campus to identify themselves. That ID works for them to be able to legally identify themselves.

In the State of Texas today, that same young person would not be able to show that same student ID at the voting place, at the voting booth, to be able to cast a vote. If you bring your concealed handgun license in, then you can cast a vote. The student will be given a provisional ballot that wouldn't count, and the person with a concealed handgun license would be able to cast a legal ballot.

Who is that really going to hurt? You have so many young people, particularly young people that don't come from wealthy families, whose parents really struggle to send them to college. They don't have cars in college, so they don't have their driver's license. They really rely on their student identification for everything that they do.

In the State of Texas, they absolutely cannot use that ID.

There are many things about the Texas voter ID law, to be honest with you, I really don't like. I became a plaintiff in the suit to try to scale back what I consider a very egregious act against voters in the State of Texas.

I was very delighted that back in July, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit actually upheld a lower court's decision that the Texas voter ID law had a discriminatory effect on minority voters and violated section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

I hope this means that the proper action will be taken to do something to scale back this law and the impact that it is having on people that simply want to exercise their suffrage, people that simply want to be able to vote. We take it for granted that you can simply vote. But this Texas voter ID law, and many laws from my time in the State legislature that were proposed—luckily, some of them advanced—would really roll back the clock on individuals that want to exercise their right to vote.

I will tell you what I have done in the meantime is joined as an original cosponsor of the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 that restores the right and advances the voting rights that were provided to us in 1965 by providing a modern day coverage test which will protect our communities from these types of discriminatory practices.

I will tell you, I am very proud to join with TERRI SEWELL, with Representative JUDY CHU, with Representative LINDA SÁNCHEZ, and, of course, with Representative JOHN LEWIS, who understands probably more than anyone in this body what discriminatory laws can do to affect a community.

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This bill, Mr. Speaker, provides coverage for 13 States upon enactment: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Arkansas, Arizona, California, New York, and Virginia. I am a very proud Texan—I love everything about our State—but, unfortunately, we have been at the forefront of discrimination against voters, and Texas is included in this legislation as well. This new geographic formula is based on current conditions and on a 25-year look-back provision.

I hope that we will be able to work together in a bipartisan manner to protect not just some of our voters but to protect every single voter in the United States who would like to cast a ballot. It doesn't matter if a voter is poor and was not able to go and renew his driver's license so that his driver's license may be 61 days expired. It doesn't matter if it is a student whose parents are just putting every little bit of money that they have to get him through college, and, because of that, his only ID is his student identification card, and he would like to use that. We need to be able to make it easier for individuals to vote in our State.

Everybody wants people to be able to lawfully vote, too. We ought to be able to work together in order to pass strong voting rights laws that protect all of our citizens, because we certainly don't want to discourage anyone from voting, and we certainly don't want to look like we are going backwards from where we once were, back in the 1960s.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

IN HONOR OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE ON ITS 107TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALMER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here tonight as a proud member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, known as the NAACP.

I am a member, and I am a life member, and I believe that the NAACP has had a profound impact upon my life. Hence, tonight, I am going to talk about the NAACP as I am also the person who is the sponsor of the original NAACP resolution for 2016. In doing this, I want to praise the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, on this, its 107th anniversary.

This resolution has 24 cosponsors. I thank all of them. I also thank the whip for allowing us this time to talk about the NAACP and to extoll many of its virtues. I thank all of the leadership for the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, this is the 11th time that we have introduced a resolution to honor the NAACP. It is the oldest civil rights organization in the United States of America. We introduced it first in 2006, and it was passed in the House by a voice vote and in the Senate by unanimous consent. When it passed in the House in 2006, it did not do so because of our help alone—"our help" meaning the Congressional Black Caucus. I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, who was the chairperson of the Judiciary Committee at the time, was there to help us get this amendment passed. I have talked on the floor about the White side of Black history. Mr. SENSENBRENNER would be a part of that history because, if not for his presence, I assure you we would not have passed this resolution in 2006.

We went on to pass it in 2007, and it passed in the House with a vote of 410-0. In 2008, it passed in the House of Representatives by 403-0; in 2009, by 424-0; in 2010, by 421-0. In 2010, of course, and thereafter, we stopped passing resolutions on the floor of the House; although, we may still present them and talk about them on the floor of the House. So, tonight, this is what we will do.

I would like to mention the mission of the NAACP, which is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all persons—not just of Black people, not just of people of color, but of all people. The NAACP also desires to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. These are lofty and noble goals because we understand that we have had much racial hatred and much racial discrimination in this country, and the NAACP took it upon itself to eliminate as much of it as possible. It has done a good job, I might add.

Let's look at a little bit of the history of the NAACP.

Back on February 12, 1909, a group of people decided that it was going to do something about the lynchings that were taking place in this country. Literally, in this country, between 1889 and 1918, thousands of African Americans were lynched—thousands. Lynching was done with mob violence. People were taken to trees, and they were lynched. It was done, a good many times, with impunity. No one was ever

prosecuted. It was a grave injustice, and there were people in this country who decided that they were going to do something about this injustice. Among the people who met initially were Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villard, William English Walling, and Ida Wells-Barnett. These persons met and issued a clarion call. Some 60 persons answered that call. Hence, the NAACP was born.

The NAACP did not have its first African American as an executive secretary until 1920. It is important for us to note that many of the Founders of the NAACP—in fact, most of them—were not of African ancestry. The first executive secretaries of the organization were all persons who were of European ancestry. In fact, the first five executive secretaries were White. They were not Black. In 1934, the NAACP had its first Black board chairperson—Louis T. Wright. Dr. Wright became chairperson after the NAACP had had a good number of White chairpersons. So the NAACP has never been and is not now an organization for Blacks only. The NAACP has always stood for an integrated society and has been an integrated organization since its inception.

In 1954, the NAACP, under the leadership and counsel of the Honorable Thurgood Marshall, who became a Justice of the Supreme Court, won the lawsuit of *Brown v. Board of Education*. This was a giant leap forward for us because this lawsuit integrated, to a certain extent, schools throughout the country. The word that was appropriately used at the time was "desegregated." These schools were ordered to be desegregated with all deliberate speed, and all deliberate speed can sometimes take a lot longer than one might expect. A good many years later, there are still those who would contend that we have not fully integrated our school systems across the length and breadth of the country.

In 1955, an NAACP member, the Honorable Rosa Parks, an African American lady, decided that she was going to take a stand, and she took that stand by taking a seat. She took a seat on a bus. In so doing, she ignited a spark that started a civil rights movement. By the way, there are many people who contend that she did this because she was tired. Well, she may have been tired, but she did it because she wanted to take a stand. She was tired of society's relegating her to the back of the bus, and she took a stand against it. Hence, we had the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted more than a year. At the end of that boycott, the bus line—the transportation system—was integrated in Alabama and, of course, later on throughout the country.

An interesting note on this point about the integration and desegregation of bus lines. There was a three-judge panel that actually heard the litigation associated with this transportation issue. On that three-judge panel, there were judges who had a